

What Should Regional Administrators and Deputy Regional Administrators Know about EPA's Role in Disaster Recovery?

What Are EPA's Objectives for Recovery Operations?

- Build preparedness to mitigate future events – Lessen the impacts of disasters by assisting federal, state and local agencies and communities prior to disasters.
- Promote sustainable and resilient rebuilding - Use EPA's expertise to inform communities, states and federal partners about rebuilding for the long-term viability of regions' people, economies and natural ecosystems. Including:
 - Help communities adapt to climate change and incorporate green infrastructure into their resiliency planning.
 - Collaborate with other Federal agencies to leverage all Federal resources in support of sustainable and resilient recovery.
- Apply EPA's Knowledge – Provide EPA's expertise to other Federal agencies, states and communities in areas of EPA responsibility such as drinking and waste water infrastructure, brownfields, air quality, or oil and hazardous materials clean-ups.
- Streamline Federal Action- Work with our partner agencies to streamline Federal oversight to efficiently fulfill statutory, permitting and/or enforcement requirements in a timely fashion, including if enforcement discretion is warranted.
- Partner with EJ/Disadvantaged Communities – Actively engage vulnerable and overburdened communities so they can meaningfully participate and have their issues addressed during recovery operations and planning.



What is the Role of Response v. Recovery? Response and recovery are two separate but coordinated phases of disaster relief that may overlap. Response – which EPA carries out under the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (managed by EPA) and the National Response Framework (managed by FEMA) – is typically conducted on a weeks to months timeframe for large scale events and addresses the immediate health and safety needs of the affected community. Recovery – EPA's responsibilities are outlined under the federal National Disaster Recovery Framework – a process that can last years, and which focuses on the long-term restoration of places and communities affected by disaster. Recovery operations can involve numerous EPA programs, not only those that were involved in the response phase; many programs involved in response take on additional responsibilities during recovery (e.g., during response, water programs may assess disaster damage, and, during recovery, begin working with states under the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program to rebuild water infrastructure).

How are Federal Disaster Recovery Operations Organized on a National Level?

When EPA is involved in recovery operations, it operates within the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). Coordinated by FEMA, the NDRF defines how Federal Agencies organize and operate to promote effective recovery and support States, Tribes and other jurisdictions affected by a disaster.

The NDRF is comprised of six Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) with a federal agency designated the Coordinating Agency for each one – 1) **Community Planning and Capacity Building** (FEMA), 2) **Economic Recovery Support** (DOC), 3) **Health and Social Services** (HHS), 4) **Housing** (HUD), 5) **Infrastructure Systems** (USACE), and 6) **Natural and Cultural Resources** (DOI). Although EPA is not a Coordinating Agency, it can play a significant part in recovery as an RSF Primary Agency (significant authorities, roles, resources) or Support Agency (specific capabilities or resources that support a primary agency in executing the mission of the RSF) for all six RSFs.

What Should a Region Consider When the Recovery Process Begins?

- (1) **Will EPA have a role in recovery?** Most disasters will not have a federal recovery effort requiring EPA involvement. In fact, FEMA has activated the NDRF for only a few incidents. When the NDRF is activated, and a sustained effort is needed, EPA managers should assess the appropriate extent of involvement and resources needed to accomplish the Agency's objectives.
- (2) **Who should the Region contact for assistance?** The Region should inform the Deputy Administrator's Office immediately of significant recovery operations. The EPA Headquarters (HQ) Office of Homeland Security represents EPA on FEMA's national-level Recovery Support Function Leaders Group, and can assist with interagency coordination. The Region should consult OCFO for financial coordination and NPM programs for program-specific issues.
- (3) **How should Regional recovery programs be organized?** Regions may need to involve a wide array of HQ and regional programs and organize multi-disciplinary teams. **Regional Incident Coordination Teams** can provide initial coordination and outreach during the response phase, in coordination with the HQ National Incident Coordination Team, but eventually regions may need to establish a **Regional Disaster Recovery Team**. These regional recovery contacts may then also want to contact each of the 6 RSFs and assign an EPA POC for each of them. (For example, the Water Program typically works with Infrastructure Systems (RSF #5) and the Sustainability Program works with Community Planning/Capacity Building and Housing (RSFs #1 and 4)).

What EPA Programs May Be Involved in Recovery Operations? Depending on the nature of the disaster, over 20 EPA existing programs may become involved in disaster recovery operations, including:

<u>Clean Water State Revolving Fund</u>	<u>ORD/Homeland Security Research</u>	<u>Brownfields</u>
<u>Drinking Water State Revolving Fund</u>	<u>Enforcement and Environmental Justice</u>	<u>NEPA</u>
<u>Global Climate Change Adaptation</u>	<u>Smart Growth/Sustainable Communities</u>	<u>Tribal Affairs</u>
<u>Agricultural Assistance</u>	<u>Air, including Indoor Air and Fuel Waivers</u>	<u>Energy Star</u>

These programs and their recovery work may be funded through regular EPA appropriations (according to usual processes), FEMA Mission Assignments, or through supplemental appropriations.

What is a Sustainability Advisor? In addition to identifying POCs for the RSFs, EPA may be requested to provide a **Sustainability Advisor** for the recovery operations, through a Mission Assignment. This position advises the FEMA Interagency Recovery Coordination team, RSFs, Federal state, and tribal partners and local officials on sustainable communities, climate change adaptation and low-impact growth, materials and products for recovery planners in the adaptation of sustainable, green, and resilient principles and practices. (See EPA/FEMA Memorandum of Agreement)

How are Other Federal Programs Involved in Recovery Operations?

FEMA provides grants, through the Public Assistance (PA) Program for debris removal, emergency protective measures, mitigation, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned and certain private facilities. FEMA also helps people directly through the Individual Assistance Program (IA), provides long term grants through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and runs the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides annual grants on a formula basis but also provides flexible grants to help cities, counties, and States recover from Presidentially-declared disasters, especially in low-income areas, subject to availability of supplemental appropriations.

The **Army Corps of Engineers** coordinates federal public works and engineering-related support, as well as providing technical assistance, engineering expertise, and construction management to support recovery projects.